



Seattle Fire Department

Fire Marshal's Office - Special Events Section

220 3rd Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98104-2608

Phone: 206-386-1450

Special Events - Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When do I need to get a Temporary Place of Assembly permit?

A: When you are operating a carnival, fair or festival. When the venue in which your event takes place does not already have a valid permit for Place of Assembly issued by the Seattle Fire Department. When the venue in which your event takes place has a valid Place of Assembly permit but there is a temporary change of use or type, a temporary change in type of activity, a temporary increase in occupancy load, a temporary change in routes of exit from the venue, or a temporary introduction of an additional hazard, (e.g. candles, display of vehicles, performances that include pyrotechnics or fire.)

Q: How do I get a permit application?

A: You may obtain a permit application in person by coming down to 220 3rd Avenue South (Seattle Fire Department's Fire Prevention Building) or; you may call the Fire Marshal's Office at (206) 386-1450 and request the Permit Section mail or fax an application to you. The Fire Marshal's Office is open, Monday -Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Note: Inspectors will not collect permit fees or permit applications in the field.

Q: How often do I have to flameproof my fabric?

A: A certificate of flame resistance is valid for 1 year when an item has been professionally treated and maintained as instructed. Tags indicating a product is inherently flame resistant are valid for the length of time specified on the tag by the manufacturer. If you've treated the fabric yourself reapplication is required as instructed by the manufacturer of the flame retardant product.

Q: Where can I get the stuff to flameproof my fabric or display materials?

A: There are several sources. A list of some resources can be found on this web site. Just remember whichever product you select must be specific to the material you are treating (i.e. natural fabrics must be treated with a flameproofing product designed to be used on natural fabrics).

Q: When do I need a tent permit?

A: Tents over 200 square feet in area (e.g. greater than 10' x 20') and canopies over 400 square feet in area (e.g. greater than 20' x 20') require Fire Department permits. A tent is defined as a membrane structure with two or more sidewalls. If it has only one sidewall or no sidewalls it is considered a canopy.

Q: What kind of heater can I use in my tent?

A: "Mushroom type" propane heaters (e.g. upright heaters with a self-contained propane fuel source) and any other heaters designed so that the propane source is located inside the tent or canopy are prohibited. Heaters that operate with the propane fuel source located outside of the tent or canopy and the heated air is pumped into the structure (e.g. salamander heaters) are allowed but require a Fire Department permit. Heaters using flammable/combustible liquids (e.g. diesel) as a fuel source are allowed but also require a Fire Department permit. Electric heaters may be operated inside a tent or canopy and do not require a Fire Department permit.

Note: This is also the case when using portable heaters in any Place of Assembly. This includes outdoor service/seating areas adjacent to the assembly occupancy, or anywhere that the public might come within ten feet of the propane.

Q: I need more propane for my cooking operation than my permit allows what can I do?

A: Call the Fire Marshal's Office at (206) 386-1450 and request to speak to a representative of the Special Event Section. There are several criteria in the Fire Code, which if you are able to meet them, may allow you to increase the quantities of propane you are permitted to use for your cooking operation.

Q: My set up isn't exactly like the floor plans I sent in with my permit. Is that a problem?

A: Your permit is contingent upon meeting the conditions attached to it. In this case the floor plans attached to the permit constitute a portion of the permit conditions. Any variation from them invalidates the permit. You may however call the Fire Marshal's Office at (206) 386-1450 and ask to speak to a representative of the Special Events Section with regard to changes you would like to make to your floor plans. These changes will be considered by the Special Events Section prior to the event you are planning, right up until the day of the event. These changes may or may not be approved.

Q: I didn't know I needed a permit until today and the event I need it for is tonight. Can I still have my event?

A: An inspector from the Special Events Section of the Fire Marshal's Office is required to approve your event. **If this is the first time you have applied for a permit AND an inspector is available**, we will try to accommodate you as best we can. This is not a guarantee that your event will be approved. If an inspector from the Special Events Section is available to look at the plans and/or the site for the event, all pertinent Fire Code requirements must still be met before the permit can be approved.

Important: Permit applications received less than 10 business days prior to the event for which they are being used, will be assessed an additional late permit surcharge of 50% of the original permit fee. Applications received 3 business days or less prior to the event may not be processed and the permit not issued.

Q: I want to have a vehicle displayed at my event. Are there any restrictions?

A: Yes, a liquid or gas-fueled vehicle or equipment can be displayed in a Place of Assembly under the following conditions:

- ✍ Maximum fuel: 1/4 of a tank or 5 gallons whichever is less.
- ✍ All gas covers shall be taped or have a locking type gas cap.
- ✍ Battery cables shall be disconnected and taped.
- ✍ Vehicles with no fuel gauge or with broken fuel gauge shall not be allowed on the event floor and shall not be displayed, unless a representative of the Fire Marshal's Office gives prior approval.